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ABSTRACT

Patterns of organization and management of Asian universities are discussed against the backdrop of the current situation of Asian universities generally. They are seeking to better address society's problems and to attain goals of national development more directly. If universities are to accomplish these tasks, given the scarce resources available to them and given the pressures from different sectors of society and the academic community itself, each institution must consider its response carefully. First, each university has to decide the extent to which it will assume new roles to replace older ones, and then it must design the modifications in its organization and management to achieve those objectives dictated by the new roles. Transplanting Western educational technology and business technology to university governance has resulted in the creation of a number of training and development programs yielding a new breed of Asian university administrators, professionally trained and prepared to apply innovative technologies to traditional patterns of organization and management with a commitment to growth, change and efficiency. (Author/JMF)

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Issues in International Education No. 5

# Evolving Patterns of Governance and Management in Asian Universities

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by Victor M. Ordonez

Institute of International Education

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The past two decades have been a period of enormous growth in education throughout the world. As the role of education has increased in dimension, the choices involved in educational decision-making have increased in complexity and in social impact. It is hoped that this series will contribute to the ongoing debate on the issues of international education through examination of alternative viewpoints and through the publication of new information. As international education in our era has broadened its scope beyond traditional activity to include developmental assistance and other concerns, the range of topics covered in the series reflect this breadth of interests in the field.

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# Evolving Patterns of Organization and Management in Asian Universities

by Victor M. Ordoñez

## INTRODUCTION

*The fifth in a series of IIE-sponsored conferences involving educational leaders from the United States and the Asia-Pacific region was held in Manila, the Philippines, in August of 1975. Organized by IIE's International Councils on Higher Education (ICHE) under grants from the Henry Luce Foundation and the Government of the Philippines, the conference focused on a topic of concern to higher education institutions throughout the world: are universities organized to deal with the critical problems facing their societies? Several facets of this question were explored in some depth in the course of the meeting.*

*One session focused on the ways in which universities are managed and the methods by which managers are identified and trained. The paper which follows illuminates the issue as it is perceived by thoughtful students of higher education from Southeast Asia. It was written by Victor M. Ordonez, presently dean of the graduate school at De La Salle University in Manila.*

*Dr. Ordonez has had wide experience in university administration, both as a student in the Philippines and as a fellow in the United States where he had an opportunity to undertake advanced research and to gain practical experience at the University of Wisconsin and at the Harvard Business School. Dr. Ordonez has also been associated with the Asian Institute of Management in Manila and has served as a consultant to the universities of the Republic of Korea.*

*We are printing Dr. Ordonez' paper in IIE's* Issues in International Education *series in order to bring his perceptions of the problem to the attention of a wider audience and we welcome comments and reactions from our readers.*

*James F. Tierney*
*Institute of International Education*
*New York, New York*
*December 1975*

## I. The Context of Changing Patterns

In assessing the readiness of Asian universities to deal with their society's critical problems a significant point on which to focus is how they deal with organization and management within their own institutions. New patterns of organization and management are evolving in response to the changing influences on Asian universities in the past decade. Discussions at the Institute of International Education conferences of 1973-74 identified some of the factors that have compelled universities in Asia to take stock of their programs, and in some cases to introduce fundamental redirections.

Among these factors are pressures to involve universities more intimately in programs for national development or for grappling with a country's societal problems. In many instances, such pressures have not been accompanied by a corresponding availability of adequate resources. Thus universities find themselves in a position in which they are expected to do more, but have less to do it with. Inflation rates in Asia and the cost of education have moved past 20 percent in several countries in the region. National budget allocations have not kept pace. Even tuition fees have not gone up correspondingly, whether because of sheer inability of students to pay or because of legislation. For example, the Philippines froze tuition fees from 1972 to 1974 and since then has permitted a maximum tuition increase of 15 percent.

Facing the situation of rising expectations and diminishing resources, Asian university administrators have sought alternative models with greater internal efficiencies and immediately measurable outputs. Often, they have found little current value in the prototype Western universities which served as their models in the first half of the century. As a result, Asian administrators have begun to look in new directions. They have found much to be learned from the accountability and cost-effectiveness measures of business management and from the organizational values and patterns indigenous to their own countries. As institutions have struggled to comply with the demands of their situation, a diversity of responses have emerged—even within the same nation. A mutual respect and recognition have developed among institutions of radically different structures, roles, clienteles, and sizes.

Before examining the institutional changes wrought by these pressures, it may be well to ask how far a university should move to abandon its traditional role in order to assume a new and more immediately appreciated one. Views of the functions of a university polarize around two extremes. At one extreme, the university is regarded as an ivory tower, a repository for the accumulation and development of timeless and universal human knowledge. The other extreme considers the university a handmaiden and change agent for government-defined priorities. Universities of excellence that embody the two ideals exist: Hong Kong University is an example of the first and the Mara Institute of Technology in Malaysia typifies the second. While there is a healthy shift from traditional to more responsive education in developing countries, due to the demand for accelerating the pace of national development, it may be unwise to move completely to one extreme to the neglect of the other. Undoubtedly, the place along the spectrum defined as optimum would vary from country to country and even from institution to institution within the same country.

U.S. universities that have sought to preserve traditional aims while responding to emerging social needs often have found a solution in layering or accretion. They have created new research or study centers through the application of added resources. In a developing country with scarce resources accretion is not always possible; restructuring to meet new needs often necessitates a dismantling of structures that have carried out more traditional functions. It is in this context that evolving patterns of organization and management in Asian universities should be examined.

## II. Evolving Patterns of Organization

The university administrator in Asia is confronted with a multiple-phase task in designing mechanisms and modifying organizational structures. He must be able to translate society's needs into objectives and goals for his institution. He then has to translate these aims and objectives into viable and responsive programs within the ambience of the institution's strengths and within the limits of its resources. After that, he has to set up an integrated hierarchy of priorities for both the newly created and the traditional programs.

While various technologies have evolved to facilitate the specific tasks described above, this paper is not the place to describe such technologies in detail. Among the technologies that have begun to be adopted in Asia, the most significant is the planning, programming, budgeting systems (PPBS) approach. For all its pitfalls of over-enthusiasm, over-quantification and over-documentation, PPBS has proven valuable, if only to force academicians to articulate desired objectives and to identify the resources which have to be marshaled in order to achieve these objectives. Such budgetary mechanisms provide concrete ways in which a university's performance can be more clearly directed to specific goals.

Perhaps more fundamental than budgetary mechanisms is the realignment of human resources within an institution to enable it to address a new set of objectives. It is only when the realignment of human resources takes place concomitantly with the reallocation of financial resources that a new pattern of organization can emerge.

Faculty members in Asian universities, no less than those in Western universities, tend to be organized

according to traditional academic disciplines. They have strong allegiances to their peers and to the body of knowledge organized around their particular disciplines. In attempting to recast the university so as to have it respond to society's problems, very few of which are unidisciplinary, there is a need for fundamental faculty reorientation. Partially successful attempts have been made in the United States (e.g., the University of Wisconsin at Green Bay and Evergreen College in Washington) to organize faculties around problem areas and themes rather than around traditional disciplines. In East Asia, such institutions as Tunghai University in Taiwan and the new campus of Philippine Christian College in the Philippines have likewise approached campus planning with a thematic perspective. Because departure from traditional structures according to disciplines is a recent innovation, however, it presents its own difficulties. Academic credibility has to be earned. Also, faculty members with the intellectual and resource flexibility to detach themselves from the moorings of their disciplines are hard to come by. This is even truer in those Asian universities patterned after the European model (e.g., the Indonesian universities modeled after Dutch prototypes, which consist of a loosely federated group of faculties with a traditionally defined discipline as the focus of organization).

A university organization that responds to society's needs may have to make significant changes in the student clientele that it directly services. Many of society's problems are best addressed by dealing with an age range that is either above or below that of the emerging-adult matriculants at most universities. Consequently, extension or continuing education for the adult population has assumed major proportions in certain universities, especially where popular access to higher education is relatively recent. Two examples of this are the massive efforts in the area of nonformal education by the educational institutions in Thailand and Indonesia. Recent studies by UNESCO have established that adult education programs have a significant impact on national development. This is true especially in developing countries which identify adult education objectives quite differently than Western countries.

The lower age range receives attention from universities that find themselves concerned with introducing radical value changes because this is most effectively done at the elementary- and secondary-school level. Young students are reached indirectly by teacher training programs in universities. In the Philippines they are reached directly in institutions which have large elementary- and secondary-school departments on campus.

Even within the emerging-adult age range served by Asian universities, the issue of access has to be addressed more directly. In countries where the student population has been relatively low, there is a conscious governmental effort to increase the percentage with access to higher education. Such policies are pursued in Sri Lanka which now has one percent of the pertinent age range enrolled in colleges, and in the states of Malaysia which have up to two percent enrolled at the tertiary level. In other Asian countries, however, the question of absolute numbers becomes less relevant and, as the Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal maintains, the critical factor is the quality and not the quantity of the student output. This is true especially in countries like Japan (15 percent of age range enrolled), Korea (7 percent), and the Philippines (23 percent).

Democratization of access is a related but separate issue. Regardless of absolute student population figures, the method of selecting the student population is being seriously reassessed. The meritocracy concept, under which only those most capable and intellectually prepared gain admission,

raises the question of the perpetuation of a socio-intellectual and sometimes male-dominated elite. Those who study the sociology of India and Pakistan often point to tertiary education as the private enclave of the elite. This is true especially in countries with a history of colonization, where, as Myrdal observes, the colonizer's educational structure and even language were used in education precisely to develop a core of indigenous assistants for the colonizers.

An analysis of the results of the recently initiated National College Entrance Examinations in the Philippines has shown that test scores are directly related to family income. Those whose families earn more and who are thereby more exposed to urban amenities invariably score higher than those with less exposure due to more limited family income. The political desideratum of social mobility therefore must be achieved in several ways. Awarding scholarships more on the basis of socio-economic status than on intellectual supremacy is one means to this end. By extension, the same approach to the issue of equal access by sex would apply. Roughly 30 percent of the students in Asian universities are women. In countries such as the Philippines with 55 percent women or Thailand with 42 percent women, this is not a problem. It is a matter of greater concern in such countries as Pakistan with 16 percent women, Korea with 24 percent women, and India with 20 percent women.

Other patterns of organization on both a national and a regional scale have resulted from attempts to address felt needs. Among the new structures created have been regional and national institutes and centers, the most significant of which are in the area of agricultural development. In countries such as the Philippines and Korea, where there is serious thought given to rationalizing and streamlining a somewhat cluttered higher educational system, the alternative of consortium and eventual merger appears to be more logical than that of creating new centers. An example of this approach in Korea is Soong Jun University, the product of a merger between two institutions hundreds of miles apart.

Educational structures have also emerged beyond the immediate parameters of the traditional academy, within both the public and private sectors. The Development Academy of the Philippines, recently created by the national government, has had a phenomenal impact in a short time on the training of government leadership to meet society's needs. In the private sector, more and more formalized training and executive development programs are relied upon to provide corporations with the manpower they require. Going beyond in-house training, private enterprise in the Philippines has created institutions such as Bancom Institute of Development Technology. Bancom Institute was established by an investment house to design and communicate strategies for total community development within rural settings—a nationally designated area of priority.

## III. Evolving Patterns of Management

In the midst of a university's restructuring and streamlining, and its creation of new units and merging of old ones, primary consideration must be given to the engineers of the reorganization. These are the educational managers who are called upon to match the university's resources with the objectives at hand. As is still the case with many American institutions, Asian universities find themselves managed by administrators who have risen from the teacher-scholar ranks. Their formal training and preparation are in disciplines quite other than educational management. These administrators find themselves in need of a set of skills substantially different from those that distinguished them in the classroom, the library or the research laboratory.

Over the past few years there has evolved in the West a concern for this situation, and the corresponding crystallization of a respectable body of educational management technology that borrows heavily from business management. In the United States, the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) is but one institutional manifestation of this concern and of its evolved technology. In Asia, where the need for trained administrators is acute, efforts have been made both to adopt Western techniques and to develop indigenous technologies.

The response to greater pressures for measures of performance and for accountability has been a new thrust toward professionalizing the management of universities. This has had several major implications for higher education leadership. Predictably, a number of institutions have been resistant to such change. Some administrators see professionalization as incompatible with the cultural setting or with the ingrained management style dominant on their campus. In other universities change has been welcome. Some leaders who find it impractical to change their own style have chosen to train a second generation of education technocrats, initially in staff positions. In some cases this solution has met with significant success. Thus the pattern of management that has evolved in several Asian universities consists of a traditional executive leadership, where the autocrat, the senior academic, or the elder statesman is the model, buttressed by a second level of professionally trained junior administrators who provide information support for policy formulation.

In any case, however, the transplanting and adoption of basically foreign educational management technologies present their own problems. The first is attitudinal, insofar as many Asian countries are mistrustful of imported technologies, a mistrust arising in some instances from the ferment of nationalism and anticolonialism. This situation occasionally brings about an interesting polarization of allegiance within a campus under conditions in which nationalist sentiments are most acutely felt among both students and faculty, and in which a number of faculty members and administrators have received formal professional training in a Western setting. Recent tensions of nationalism in Malaysian and Indian universities which have had many of their staff educated abroad illustrate this point.

Even when the initial attitudinal obstacle is not present, there remains the much more real consideration of the basically different cultural and value systems underpinning borrowed technologies. For example, the whole set of premises underlying the MBO (Management By Objectives) approach is not always immediately apparent in a culture where paternalism and veneration for authority tend to be ingrained in the country's tradition. Another example is the use of peer judgment, individual evaluation, promotions boards, and rank and tenure boards, which has produced problems not typically found in a Western context. Then, too, such quantitative technologies as enrollment projection formulae, PPBS, and similar tools are premised on an attitude of precision, respect for quantitative data, and open access to information not always easy to find in Asian settings.

This is not to say that such technologies cannot be sufficiently adapted to benefit Asian universities. Several universities have been significantly assisted by use of such Western educational tools. After all, many of these institutions were originally patterned and structured after Western prototypes, whether after an American model, as in the case of the Philippines; a European model, as in India or Hong Kong; or on a transitional model, as in Malaysia.

Difficulties of implementation tend to arise when possible differences in cultural underpinnings are not sufficiently recognized or when the enthusiasm of the bearer of the technology leads to an "overkill" situation, the imposition of more technology than the institution is ready for. This situation is one not unknown to Western universities, especially the smaller ones. Their fascination with computers and computer-based information systems and data banks has sometimes led to a counterproductive resource expenditure beyond the university's level of need: the syndrome of spending a dollar to account for the spending of a dime.

## IV. Emerging Roles

One can discern emerging roles for agencies that must deal with universities in the context of patterns of organization and management that are evolving as the university faces society's problems. The *national government* in some countries has been asked by the higher education sector for a re-examination of the extent of its supervision and control, and of the policies affecting access to government funding for programs of both public and private institutions. Curricular modifications and realignments which attempt to confront more directly felt needs become in practical instances severely constrained. They are affected either by overprescribed curricular requirements prior to government certification, as in the Philippines, or by imposed government credentialing exams, which produce the same effect as prescribed rigid curricula, as in Pakistan. Supervision by the government is in many instances justified on the basis that institutions would otherwise fall below acceptable standards.

Another side of concern over government control involves the issue of defining the mechanisms of access to government assistance. Public institutions have received mandates to fulfill new expectations but have not always received the corresponding budgetary increments. Private institutions have started to make known their positions as institutions with a public responsibility and function that serve a national need, and as such worthy of public support on a program basis. At present, the Fund for Assistance to Private Education in the Philippines is sponsoring a concerted effort by the private sector to articulate this type of position.

*Funding agencies*, both national and international, are also adjusting their strategies. The practice of sending Asian scholars to the West for degree programs is fast declining, not only because of high financial resource requirements, but also because the experience of scholars not returning has become painfully familiar. Where scholars are still sent to the West, the emerging strategy has been that of short-term programs and internships, sufficient to establish contacts and gain a general exposure to alternative insights rather than to gain mastery through formal credentialing.

In many instances, of course, training is sought within the Asian region or within the country itself. Presently, the scholarship and fellowship schemes of the Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning (ASAIHL), as well as the regional centers developed by Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), have been most helpful in the promotion of this orientation.

The use of consultants and scholars from the West is also gradually diminishing. Asians are more ready to step into roles that once only the Western consultant could assume. Where possible, funding agencies are utilizing Asians within Asia for consultancy and scholarly assignments. In April, 1976, the New York-based United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia is sponsoring a workshop to introduce trained and experienced Asian educators to the practice of cross-cultural consultancy within Asia.

Within the university itself, the administrator finds himself in an emerging role more concerned with managerial issues than with purely academic ones. In situations where scarce resources do not permit full-time specialized administrative positions, such as those of a planning officer, a public relations officer, a development officer, and so on, administrators are compelled to perform several roles simultaneously, or must appoint faculty members to assume part-time administrative responsibility.

Those universities that attempt to solve their problems more directly exert the most pressure on their faculty. Faculty members see new roles and allegiances for themselves as they address themselves to problem areas rather than to traditional discipline content. They find themselves being pulled in different directions, as resources are not adequate to respond to all the various demands.

This paper has discussed patterns of organization and management against the backdrop of the current situation of Asian universities generally. To sum up: universities are seeking to better address society's problems and to attain goals of national development more directly. If universities are to accomplish these tasks, given the scarce resources available to them and given the pressures from different sectors of society and even from within different sectors of the academic community itself, each institution must consider its response carefully. First, each university has to decide the extent to which it will assume new roles to replace older ones, and then it must design the modifications in its organization and management to achieve those objectives dictated by the new roles.

The process of modifying patterns is not without useful models in the West. In addition, there is a respectable body of educational management technology that has been developed and largely drawn from management science found in business.

Although transplanting these technologies to Asian institutions has its dangers, the exercise has proved to be of value when selectively adopted and combined with indigenous approaches. The need to bring this hybrid technology to bear on university governance has resulted in the creation of a number of training and development programs. Gradually, especially at a second level of operation, there is emerging a new breed of Asian university administrators, professionally trained and prepared to apply innovative technologies to traditional patterns of organization and management. These professional administrators have a commitment to growth, change and efficiency, a combination which should serve them well in the years to come, as they seek to complete the redirection of higher education in Asia.

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The Institute of International Education was founded in 1919 to promote international understanding through education. It administers scholarship and fellowship programs for the U.S. and foreign governments, universities, foundations, corporations and international organizations, and provides support services to researchers and advisers on developmental assistance projects abroad. Seeking to promote effective educational interchange, IIE offers information and consultative services through a network of offices in the U.S. and overseas and carries on an extensive schedule of seminars and workshops. IIE acts as the parent agency for the International Councils on Higher Education, which bring together U.S. and foreign university heads and other educational policy-makers in a continuing series of conferences.


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